

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #8390/01 3402306
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 062306Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0411
INFO RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 2108
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 9632
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ DEC 9099
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 5688
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1784
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 2448
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1155
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 6376
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0371
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4198
RUCNDTA/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1878
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1522

UNCLAS BOGOTA 008390

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [OFDP](#) [AR](#) [CA](#) [SW](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: G-24 CONFERENCE ON COLOMBIA FORUM FOSTERS DIALOGUE
WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND DONORS

Summary

1. The international community expressed political support for the GOC at the G-24 Third International Conference on Colombia on November 29-December 1. The joint G-24 Bogota declaration recognized GOC advances on human rights and sustainable development, stressed the international commitment to support GOC efforts to fight narcotrafficking, and called for more GOC action to against impunity. Local civil society groups urged better implementation of the Justice and Peace Law and voiced concern about human rights abuses and victims' rights. International civil society groups criticized spray programs for allegedly harming the health of local communities. End Summary.

Third Conference on Colombia

2. Over 400 representatives from 35 countries participated in the Group of 24 (G-24) Third International Conference on Colombia on November 29-December 1 in Bogota. Building upon conferences in London in 2003 and Cartagena in 2005, delegates from international organizations, local civil society groups, the GOC and donor countries focused on four themes (poverty, victims, peace and human rights, democracy) to coordinate international assistance to Colombia. The U.S. head of delegation, Paul Bonicelli, USAID Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, welcomed robust dialogue among the GOC, civil society and the international community, and praised GOC progress on human rights. He also clarified that Plan Colombia is not solely about military aid, noting USG programs to strengthen democratic institutions and assist victims, indigenous, Afro Colombians, and displaces persons.

Bogota Declaration Recognizes Advances and Challenges

3. The Bogota Declaration, signed by Vice President Santos and the Troika Ambassadors (Argentina, Canada and Sweden), reaffirmed support for the tripartite dialogue and the increased space for civil society participation. Signatories

affirmed support for the GOC in its efforts to strengthen democracy and implement human rights measures. The statement also showed solidarity in the global fight on terrorism, drugs and corruption. The declaration demanded armed illegal groups respect human rights and release all hostages, and condemned the killings of the kidnapped Colombian Congressmen this summer. It underscored GOC commitment to protecting and guaranteeing the rights of journalists, union workers and human rights defenders. It also encouraged the investigation of extrajudicial killings and recognized the important role of the Prosecutor General's Office and the Supreme Court in combating impunity.

GOC: Progress and Ongoing Efforts

¶4. President Uribe, Vice President Santos, Foreign Minister Araujo and other cabinet members stressed the need for interagency coordination to address concerns raised by civil society and donor countries. Uribe highlighted advances in the "recovery of freedom" from the FARC and paramilitaries through his democratic security policies. He said transparency is boosting confidence and respect for human rights. He would continue to pursue policies promoting social cohesion and economic prosperity. The Vice President's Director of Human Rights, Carlos Franco, spoke about balancing justice and peace, noting that over 84,000 victims have registered under the JPL and that versiones libres have led to the discovery of numerous remains and mass graves. National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation Director Eduardo Pizarro said the GOC will soon issue an administrative reparation program to ensure more timely relief for victims. Luis Alfonso Hoyos, Presidential Director of Accion Social, also outlined socio-economic achievements and outreach to local communities.

Civil Society Voices Concerns

¶5. In its 21-point declaration, Colombian civil society groups called for more support for victims and reparations, as well as for greater victim participation in the JPL. While critical of the GOC, civil society debate throughout the conference was moderate and constructive. The declaration urged the GOC to respect the independence of the judicial branch, particularly in the para-political investigations. The declaration expressed concern about the current "humanitarian crisis" in Colombia, including displacement, selective murders and extrajudicial killings. It did not explicitly refer to the FARC, but called for the release of all hostages held by armed groups. It strongly rejected all "terrorist actions." Lastly, it urged the GOC better integrate environmental protection, respect for collective territorial rights, and more alternative economic opportunities into its counternarcotics policy.

¶6. The international civil society declaration was more critical, accusing the GOC of allotting more resources to demobilized paramilitary than victims. In reference to the Chiquita case, it urged the GOC to take political and legal action against multinational companies that made payments to paramilitary or other armed groups. The statement criticized the GOC's Center for Coordination of Integral Action (CCAI), accusing it of stressing military-oriented programs that result in more violence for local communities. It called aerial and manual fumigation "weak and marginal" in the effort to stem illegal drugs. The declaration reaffirmed the necessity of the GOC maintaining political dialogue with the FARC, but did not criticize FARC kidnappings and crimes. Vice President Santos rebuked the group for this omission, asking why the statement did not condemn the FARC given the newly released photos of FARC hostage Ingrid Betancourt.

¶7. In roundtable's between the civil society and the international community, civil society leaders said para-political ties and "incomplete demobilization" threaten

democracy. Some groups recognized the fall in murders in recent years and the increased capacity of the Fiscalía and courts, but they also called for more concrete action to improve the human rights situation. Delegates also voiced opposition to fumigation in Putumayo, maintaining that local communities' health and economy are adversely affected. Father Hector Fabio Henao and other civil society leaders agreed that, although differences in opinion remain, events such as this provide a useful forum for debate.

Nichols